

#103 .75



no. 17

50¢



Love by Sheryl Kirkhead

of some kind. For those of you who share my feelings on fan fiction, you will find (I hope) a delightfully mixed bag of goodies, ranging from straight up trash horror and an old-fashioned monster story complete with a young, handsome scientist and his beautiful assistant. There should be something for everybody's taste.

FOR WRITERS TAKE NOTE: This issue's eye-boggling cover was drawn by Clyde Caldwell, 305 N. Grant Drive, Greensboro, N.C. 27403, who will be only too glad to accept your art, as well...for a small consideration. Write directly to Clyde for details. And of pigs.

The pleasure of new faces in this issue is matched only by my lack of any interesting background info at all. I really should ask for that when I accept contributions, but I'm afraid of becoming too organized. Kevin G. Macdonnell was recommended to me by Mark Sheare, another South African fan and good correspondent of mine. You'll see some of his work in future issues, as he sent me a really nice batch of it. I have another story by David C. Smith on hand, entitled "The Dark," which I've tentatively set for Feb or Mar, whichever I decide will be the special horror issue. William L. Kapp and Jimmy Lampkin are both Californians, but aside from that, I know nothing.

The old faces are easier to talk about. You should be familiar with such regulars as Sheryl Kirkhead, Mark Schultz, Gary Frutkin, Dan Cederbaum, Ed Bremner (who also publishes a strange little magazine called The Purple Wasp, which you can order from him at 10¢ each, or 3/79¢, at 888 Bayview Avenue, Northridge, Calif. 91343), and Marshall Schweitzer (whose recommendations I refuse to plug, even tho' I'll feature one of my better stories, because he's already got an ad on page 37). Less frequently seen is Ed Kocera, altho we hope to remedy that with the fine batch of art he recently sent me. Ed, by the way, publishes a beautiful fanzine called NEMIS, which is well worth the 75¢ the latest issue costs. It features fine art, good stories and articles, a mind-boggling color cover, and is mailed flat, protected by cardboard. Where can you get a deal like that, these days? Ed's address is 2000 N. Grant Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65803.

And finally (tho we make up for putting her last, I've given her her very own paragraph!), all too infrequently seen in these pages is Janet Fox. Altho her fiction usually appears in many fanzines, her only other S&T appearance was in #12 (and then I set the tin date wrong!). Hopefully, we'll be seeing her work again in the not too distant future.

And as long as I'm giving names, let me throw in a good word for MORGUE, an S&T-type zine put out by Dave Mitchell, 230 Irvington Drive, Toluca, California 91382; 30¢ each, or 3/79¢. No fiction since gotta stick together, you know.

Next issue I'd planned an on all words & worry issue, but I haven't all the contributions in yet so I won't be doing anything. I have definitely lined up "No Names For Eleven," written and illustrated by Ed Neely, and a short-story by Dan Flato, "The Coming of del-Arr," illustrated by Dan Cederbaum. And, as you, the regular features will be back...Charles T. Smith's fanzine reviews, Marshall Schweitzer's "New Point 8"--this installment on Clark Ashton Smith--and Robert Weisberg's "Searching for the Partisan," this time spotlighting William Gray Seger.

And my best wishes for a happy holiday season for all of you.

John Stryker

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Sheryl Birkenhead	Jimmy Linspain
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cover by Clyde Caldwell

back cover and center page illustration by Kevin G. MacDonnell

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The Smartest Man

"Why don't you watch where you're going?" Kradon shouted.

The little man Kradon had knocked down looked up nastily. His startled apology seemed unintelligible. Kradon let the fellow make a comment, then grabbed the man's forearm with both hands and shook him violently.

"Be quiet, you stupid donkey! Can't it be enough to place your miserable body in my path? Do you have to make matters worse by insulting me with your tongue as well?"

By this time a rather large and curious crowd was circling around the pair. Soon the narrow market alley was choked with robe-clad men and women.

"Bu...but, sir," the little man protested. "I, I did not mean to..."

"You did not mean to?" Kradon repeated with a high pitched imitation of the little fellow's voice. "Does your body move through the streets of its own volition?"

"No, sir, I..."

"So, you did try to trip me, you filthy cretin!" Kradon bellowed, his fist shaking menacingly near the other's jaw. Suddenly he was aware of the people around him. In several twinkles of a second the rage that had been boiling through him drained completely away. He forced his facial muscles to relax into a calm, even friendly expression. He could afford no more incidents like this one!

"Well, I'm sure you meant no real harm," he said with a broad smile. "Here, let me help you pick up the drinks you were carrying." A brief shower of surprise flitted through the crowd as Kradon bent over to assist the short man. By the time he had finished picking up the fat, yellow leaves of bread, most of the passersby had moved on.

Kradon quickly slipped into the foot traffic, breathing more easily. The incident was over, and no real harm had been done. But he had been lucky, and he knew it. His disguise certainly wouldn't have stood a close inspection, had anyone become suspicious.

Yes, Kradon had been lucky again. In appearance he was close enough to the inhabitants of Kandon, but there the resemblance ended. As soon as he had any dealings with the idiots who passed for loyal citizens, he found it difficult to hide his contempt. But what was an intelligent person to do? The really depressing part was that he had to act friendly toward this mass of fools.

Kradon had always taken it as a personal insult that fate should have forced him to trust these pigs as agents.

The stream of foot traffic flowed into the main place, and Kradon had his first look at the message screen for many weeks. It was a symbol of welcome and security that was refreshing after a prolonged exile in the mountains. It had been a long time since Kradon had been able to move about the city freely, and the feeling was good, even if it meant facing the possibility of arrest.

Straight ahead, at a distance of two hundred yards, stood the huge screen. Scores of people were milling around, talking, listening, or just waiting. Kradon looked right and left, considering the purpose that had again brought him within the danger of the city. Before he could decide which way to go, the screen lit up, and the face of an elderly man appeared.

"Attention, citizens!" the man said, his voice booming across the

in Town

square from hidden speakers. "This is Lander, your mayor," Kradon called perversely; these simple minded citizens probably thought the whole thing was magic. He sneered at Lander's image as he remembered the old score yet to be settled.

"I have an announcement concerning the alien space craft that sits in the middle of the government courtyard," the mayor said in grave tones.

An excited murmur rose from the people, who now crowded closer to the screen. Kradon found himself pushing forward, too. This was what he had been waiting for, what he had risked his life by returning to the city for. He saw half-dressed reports of "visitors from the skies" that had filtered up into the headlines were true after all. Kradon held his breath as Lander continued.

"As you know, the craft has not moved since it landed, several weeks ago. However, just a few hours ago some unknown force destroyed an empty storage shed near the capital building." A huge, prolonged gasp went up from the crowd like a chord from an immense living organ. The old mayor allowed sufficient time for the chord to die away, then drew a deep breath and went on.

"Shortly after this, the strangers sent a brief radio message in our language; the first attempt at communication they have made. In their message they demanded that we translate their next communication within one day, or face immediate destruction by their weapons. This next message was in a strange language that our experts have been unable to translate. Here is a sample of the message, spelled phonetically in our own alphabet."

The third phrase of the aged mayor was quickly replaced by a slice-up of a piece of paper. Kradon strained forward as he considered the symbols. His brow furrowed. The syllables were somehow familiar, yet changed.

Kradon nearly laughed out loud as the first word revealed itself to his understanding. How simple, he thought. It was his own native tongue, reduced into an elementary code. Necessary for him, he added to himself; these fools would never understand it.

Kradon beamed with smug satisfaction. It was as he suspected. The "aliens" were from his home world, probably some kind of survey team. The planet Symbethia, of which Lander was the principal city-state, had been off limits to members of Kradon's race ever since the Third Intergalactic War. That was why he had chosen it, when he fled his home world three years before.

They were undoubtedly sending a team to make a periodic check of Symbethia's intellectual and technological progress.



story by William L. Rupp
illustrated by Ed Emery

What a perfect setup! And such poetic justice that his own countrymen, who had slandered and rejected him, should now provide him means by which he could extricate himself from a very unpleasant situation.

Before he could translate were than the first three words ("The Imperial Government...") the picture changed, again revealing Lander.

"Your government urgently needs the help of the best linguists in the city to translate this alien message. Due to the urgency of the situation, any linguist previously associated with the Braden school may volunteer for service without fear of arrest. All charges will be dropped. Remember, Lander needs your help now!"

The screen went blank.

Braden's eyes brightened. So, they needed someone to decipher the "alien" language, did they? Well, this was the chance he had hoped for when he risked re-entering the city. He was willing to try anything to get back in the good graces of the Council, no matter what the danger. Long wastes in disguise among the stupid backwoodsmen had driven Braden to desperation.

The mayor had said that Braden's followers would be pardoned, but nothing had been said about Braden himself. Braden sailed and shook his head side to side as he began walking across the square. There was little doubt in his mind that the Council still meant to show him no mercy.

But if the Council needed the best man available to communicate with the aliens, maybe one favor would exceed the other. Surely no one was more qualified than he, the greatest language expert on the planet!

A fat woman, carrying a woven basket on her head and pulling a crying child behind her, nearly collided with Braden as he cleared the entrance of the government compound. This time, he merely stepped out of the way. He was in such good spirits that he almost smiled at the creature.

#

Lander sat at his round table, thoughtfully stroking his beard with one hand while holding an official report in the other. He was about to reach for a marker when an angry chorus of voices exploded in the hall outside his office. Lander turned around as the door crashed open. He watched Braden, a small army of minor officials clinging to his robe.

"We tried to stop him!" a skinny little clerk squealed. "He just pushed us aside."

Lander looked at Braden for several seconds in a combination of surprise and amusement. Then his face turned red as he sprung to his feet.

"Braden! What are you doing here?" he said hotly. "You dare you walk into my private office like this?"

"You need a communications expert, don't you?" Braden asked coolly. "Well, she founded the school of rational/symbolic logic communications!" He jabbed at the mayor's chest with his index finger. "I did, of course."

Lander wisely sat down again on his massive, cushioned stool. His face's color returning to normal.

"Have you forgotten that you are a wanted man?" the mayor asked. The small crowd in the office was, by this time, augmented by several guards.

"That's true," Braden admitted, his lip curling contemptuously as he spoke. "An unjust charge, if I may say so."

"Enough!" a white-haired official blurted out. "You completely paralyze the city's educational system with your word nonsense, disrupt communication with the rest of the planet, and you call that nothing!"

"And what about the three hundred men who are now in mental

justification, thanks to your school?" yet another added. "You are confused then with your weird logic that they were completely insane."

"That's all in the past," Kraden said. "Besides, it wasn't my fault that they couldn't understand my reasoning methods. They were simply inferior intellectuals."

"Why shouldn't we arrest you, and send you to the hangman?" Lander said in a low, grim voice.

"Because you need me to translate the message from the aliens," he answered with a smile. Kraden started to say something more, but his attention was suddenly diverted by the arrival of an officer dressed in a red and black tunic.

The officer pushed his way through the tightly packed crowd and was startled when he turned toward Kraden. He opened his mouth to speak, but instead faced the mayor.

"Lander, when was this criminal captured?" the officer asked.

"He wasn't captured," the mayor answered glidingly. "He walked right in as if his name had been engraved on my appointment schedule." Lander saw that the suspect was staring wildly at the soldier.

"Oh, yes, let me introduce you to Overstegiesier Sarven, chief of our Intelligence Department."

"What's that to us?" Kraden countered. "Just another incompetent, no doubt."

"I've come to report that we've made no progress with the aliens' message. We simply don't translate it."

Lander rose again and faced Kraden, saying: "Can you?"

The language expert abruptly sat down in Lander's chair and planted his feet on the desk. He looked up at the mayor: "For a price!"

"And that price is the dismissal of all charges against you, right?" Lander stared coldly down at the wiry figure as he spoke.

"Correct. So you meet my demand, or else! I let you take your chances with the aliens! They have threatened to destroy the city if you don't comply with their unusual demands, haven't they?" Kraden turned his back on Lander. He picked up the official report the mayor had been reading, and wiped his thin nose with it.

"All right," Lander sighed after a brief consultation with his fellows in the hall. "We can't take chances with these creatures. They have demonstrated the power to destroy as if we don't translate their message. The question remains, why have they delivered this strange ultimatum?"

"Whatever the reason, I'll find out," Kraden said. Inwardly, he couldn't help wondering what had gotten into the minds of his subordinates. He gave a little half-smile as he got to his feet. "Just be thankful that the only really intelligent man in this city has decided to help you. Now let's get going!"

"Very well," Lander suddenly looked tired and defeated. "Sarven will show you to the phrensy-translation room at once." Lander nodded significantly to the intelligence officer, who smiled in reply.

Kraden could not help but smile as he followed the officer down the hallway. This had been easier than he had expected. So the old boys were really worried this time! The competition between the cities had been keen ever since he had landed uninvited two years ago, but the Council seemed especially anxious about the effect of this extraordinary contact on foreign relations.

And now he, Kraden, the greatest language expert on the planet of Hyembla, would easily translate this message. Whatever the reason behind



This strange stunt, Kraden was sure to add several feathers to his cap as far as the Service Council was concerned. Maybe they would even appoint him to a seat on the Council!

"Here it is," Serwon said as they reached a doorway at the end of the hall. Once inside, the soldier pointed to a massive machine. "This is our phonetic-translator. It takes the signals from the alien ship and prints the phonetic equivalent in our lang. . ."

"You don't need to explain!" Kraden interrupted impatiently.

"Of course," said Serwon. "Their signals are extremely complicated."

"Intelligible?" Kraden growled, as he sat down at the machine's control board. Suddenly Lander and the other Council members walked into the room.

"There's one more thing," Lander said. "If you fail, the death sentence will be carried out as planned."

Kraden simply laughed in the old man's face. "Don't worry," he said. "There isn't a language I can't translate. Now get out of here and stop bothering me!" He turned his back to them and began operating the machine.

4

Hours later, Lander, Leffon, and the others returned to see what progress Kraden was making. But instead of the usually stocky figure, they found a quiet, even more nervous individual who looked ten years older. Kraden stared anxiously at the piece of paper that lay on the desk before him.

"What's the matter?" Lander said, leaning over Kraden's shoulder. "You aren't having trouble, are you?" A gleeful hint of mock seriousness crept into his voice. "Oh, that's a shame, isn't it, Serwon?"

Serwon shook his head and clucked elaborately. "Yes, that would be too bad. And he was so sure. Ha, ha, ha, ha!" The soldier tried manfully to maintain a straight face.

"Aren't you going to say anything?" a Council member asked.

"Very well, this has gone far enough." All traces of humor quickly

revealed from Lander's voice. "You have ten minutes to hand over a translated copy of the aliens' message. If you fail, we have a rope waiting in the courtyard. Ten minutes and no more!" The officials quickly left the room, but Kradon showed no change in emotion.

He slowly sat and read, over and over, the message he had so easily translated hours before:

The Imperial Government of Ith the Third sends you greetings, dear countryman--or should we say 'traitor'?

Perhaps you thought we of your own race had forgotten the crimes you committed against our people? You always did have a high regard for your ability to get away with murder.

As a matter of fact, when we first arrived seven weeks ago we had no idea how to find you, or even if we'd come to the right planet. Eventually, we learned a strange individual had set up a language school some time ago and was presently wanted for a number of crimes--crimes which had a familiar ring. We decided to let you come to us.

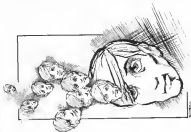
Our "allurement" was nothing more than a piece of bait, designed to tempt you out of whatever hiding place you had found for yourself. The Council of Irdon was only too happy to cooperate.

You must be aware that they have a unique form of execution on this planet, known as "basking." The natives are anxious to demonstrate it for us. I don't believe you will have long to wait.

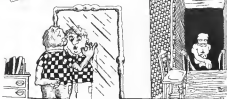
Sincerely,

Munglin
Commander, Space Ship Resolve

Kradon heard a sudden, thumping sound from outside. Someone was testing a galloping trapdoor.



WRECKING CREW



story by Maxwell Schweitzer
illustrated by Al Greenleaf

3. There is a dead lady living in this house. She's across the hall, just two doors down. Enter slowly, tip-toe across the floor. I've got the boards that don't squeak marked with chalk. Walk on them and be careful not to wake her.

How can she wake up if she is dead? I don't know, really. I never saw another dead person besides her, so how do I know she was? I can feel it somewhere. I know she was and will wake up someday. She is not alive, but there is a kind of life in her. It throbs and hums so quietly that you can't really hear it; you sense it. No, no, I didn't ever feel her for real! You just can't touch a person like her just like that! You can't!

Perhaps, she's just lying there, dead/alive. Her eyes are closed, or they are open; I don't know. Funny, I try to remember. I even make notes about it and ask George to remind me, but he forgets, too.

What? Oh, George is the gargoyle at the bottom of the front stairs. He's my very best friend. Do you know him?

The dead/alive lady, yes, I was just talking about her. There are many things about this place I can't explain. You'll have to see her, and feel them yourself, and then you'll understand. But if I told you you would never know what I was talking about. Maybe you would be able to explain it to your friends, and maybe you wouldn't. And again, maybe you might like to stay here. Would you? You'll like it here, I know. Lots of rooms placed to explore; rooms, rooms. Funny things hiding in the closet. And leaves and the other gargoyles are swell, too. Then there's the griffin at the bottom of the hallway. He flies around a lot looking for his lost brother, so I guess you'll have to get used to all that flopping. But you'll like it here anyway.

And of course you'll have to deal with me sometime and together we'll sneak up on the dead/alive lady in the room two doors down the hall and we'll crouch by her bedside and listen to the life we can't really hear come throbbing and humming and wheezing and swirling through the wires that

came out of the floor and up into the bed, under the blankets, into her pillow and finally into her ears. Yes, it will be fine!

2.

Where did I come from? Somewhere. I live here--in The House. I've always been here, as long as The House has been. Well, maybe not that long. Maybe The House has been here just a little bit longer. But I really can't tell because there are no clocks or calendars around here, though we might see if we can find some in that junk in the attic sometime. Why, I couldn't even know what a clock is if I hadn't seen one in a picture book. Tell me, have you ever seen one? Do they really say "tick tick tick" all the time?

Until you came there were no people around anywhere. People like you and me, I mean. I don't want to make George and the griffin feel bad. They're people, too, of course, but not like us. Oh, there might have been some other people here once but it would had to have been a long time ago. I have seen pictures. A big tall one with silvery hair and a lady, a very strange lady who looks a little bit like the dead/alive lady except she didn't have those wrinkles in her face or anything and she was glad. And there was a lady, too, but don't worry about them because they're only pictures and not real people like you and me.

You seem confused. You say I've been here a long time, apparently. Yes, of course, I've been here for a long, long time. Maybe forever. That's what I told you. weren't you listening? Oh? Great! What do you want? Of course I haven't changed! I've always been this big. Nothing ever changes around here.

They glad?

Stories and legends about us? Really? What do they say? And how can they say things about us when I've never seen them. Come on, tell me what they say.

3.

Outside? What do you mean? Please explain the idea clearly.

Well, I suppose it could be possible for us to go through the front door, but you see I can't because I don't know what's out there and George always says I shouldn't. Is that outside, behind the door?

Well, now that you mention it, I did wonder how you got in here. Did you come up a corridor and out of one of those locked doors with all the handles and knobs and the huge locks? Through the front door? But what about all the terrible things in that room? The room behind the front door, of course. Well, what did you do about the things? They're there! I've never seen them but I'm absolutely sure they're there. Let me tell you how I know and maybe then you'll understand.

There was this other griffin once. He sat at the bottom of the veranda, right across from the one that's there right now. His name? Griffins don't have names, at least not around here. So they have names where you came from? Anyway, one day the griffin was gone and he never came back so I knew he had to be dead. He would've come back unless he died. He had to have known his brother would've gotten lonely. So I knew that he's dead, even though his brother can't even quite believe that, and he keeps looking around for him.

George and I finally figured out that he had gone outside - well, we didn't call it that, but it's essentially what you mean. And when he never came back, I knew there had to be something dreadful behind the door and I've been afraid to go near it ever since. I don't know what it is, really. Maybe it's just a room with no floor, just a hole that goes on and on forever. I've often had bad dreams about the poor griffin, lost in the dark room, unable to find the door again, flying as long as he can but eventually getting tired and falling down, down into the great big black hole without a bottom. Sometimes I've thought that he had to die for some reason, but I've never been able to understand that idea at all.

But a room behind the door? What, then? A hole that goes have a



betwixt and you climbed up and-

So? A big space without any walls or doors or anything, and giant houses far away? Now can that be? I don't understand. Please explain. It doesn't make any sense at all. How can there be giant houses when there is The House? The corridors and rooms go on forever and there just can't be giant houses.

I'm sorry. Please don't get mad. I can't seem to be ready or making or anything but I just can't understand you. What else can there be besides rooms and halls and stairs?

Fields full of plants? I don't know what you mean. Please describe them. Little green things that grow? No, I've never seen them, then.

Yes, I know what lettuce is. You mean like that then. Oh! I know. Like the vegetables the refrigerator makes sales out of.

Say! That reminds me. I'm hungry. Come eat!

You'll get to like the food here.

Now, will you stop using those silly, make-up words that don't mean anything! First it's "outside," now "windows!" No, there are none around here, not if I understand what you mean.

Like a mirror, only you can see through it? Well, you can see through a mirror, can't you? At least around here there are rooms behind each mirror and whenever I look through this other person who's not real like you and so looks back. He's funny, because he always looks and acts and dreams like I do, and he must be very stupid because all he can do is imitate me. He must not know how to do anything by himself.

Still, even if there were any of these window things around, which there aren't, how would that help me to understand what you're trying to say? I'd just see more rooms, maybe even the rooms where the rest of the people you've told me about are, but that wouldn't help me see outside.

Say, why don't you bring all these other people over sometime? It would be just grand. Maybe then, if we all got together, we could open the front door and see what's outside. I don't think I'd be so afraid if there were a lot of people with me.

This is Ozzie. Say hello.

Why do you stare at me that way? Is you feel alright? I hope it wasn't something in the lunch that made you sick. Here, sit down. You'll feel better in a minute.

Are you laughing? I don't like that kind of laugh. Please stop. Why don't you answer Ozzie? He just asked you a question, you know. He wants to know what's so funny. It's impolite not to answer someone.

Is it the way he looks that makes you laugh? That's a cruel thing to do! He can't help it. He was made that way. Please answer him.

This is NOT a joke!

Why do you not answer? George only wants an answer. And I do, too. You're acting very strangely.

Hey! Where are you going? What about the dead/alive lady in the room upstairs? Can't you want to see her? Not even a peek?

Where have you come? I can't find you. Wait! I hear you now! You're down by the front door! What are you doing? Don't - !

Where did you go? Out the door? You shouldn't have done that. Remember the big dark hole without any bottom? And the things? George warned you.

Where are you?

Are you dead now?

Please come back. I feel a strange feeling that I've never had before in my whole life. I feel little and lost and far away, like the griffin in the blackness in the room beyond the door, and I feel there's no one but me in the whole House. Please come back,...

Oh there you are! For a while I was worried that you had gone out the front door and were falling down forever in the blackness. But I know it was all a game and why didn't you tell me you were playing? How did you make it sound like you went out the front door? You were fooled George. He said you did.

What do you mean, will I stop? Stop what? Why should I want to stop talking to George? He's my friend!

Let's talk about happier things. I'm so glad you're back. I've been looking all over for you and George said I should even explore the parts of The House I haven't been in yet and try to find the rooms where you and all the other people live. The griffin helped, too, but he didn't find anything.

Oh! You brought along your friends! Great! I'm so glad to meet you.



everyone! Is this everyone? Are there more? Would you like to sneak in and take a look at the dead/alive lady with the wires in her ears?

You would? Wonderful! Come with me!

Up these stairs and around and through this door and Oh! Don't squeak these boards! You'll wake her!

Hey? Everybody? What's the matter? Why are you all staring like that? What is so terrible? I already told you about her, so there's no reason to be surprised.

Look! Her eyes are opening!

Hey! What are you doing? You can't - you can't touch her! Not

Scorp! You're hurting her! STOP IT OR I'LL KILL YOU!

Hey! Let us go!

Please stop...She's changing. She's falling apart. You're killing her.

Please don't...

2. SCORP Why did you do it? What're you doing now? You don't have to carry me. I can walk. There's nothing wrong with me.

Hey. I don't like the way you two are talking! No, I don't at all! That legends are true? She should've died a hundred years ago!

Wait! I know! I know! I really do! Will you let us go, now that I've guessed?

You're taking me outside! You're taking me where the dead people go! Yes, that's it. You took the Griffin, too. You're all dead and you're coming to make me one of you. Yes, I see.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I won't let you do it! Not! I don't want to go out the front door and into the deep, deep hole without a bottom! Not! Stop!

What are you doing? I don't understand at all. This is a nice game, but you don't really intend to go out the front door, now, do you? You can't. You can't! YOU CAN'T!

What about the big, dark pit?

What about the things?

SCORP: The light! It's hurting my eyes! Stop it! Let us go! George, help me! Don't let them take me! I don't want to die!

13. A BIG open space going on FOREVER, no walls, no floors, NOTHING. It was all WHITE! I seemed so little and lost, like I wasn't any bigger than a speck of dust. OPEN! Everywhere OPEN! I couldn't begin to tell you what it was like. The light burning my eyes out and all the dead people gathered around me and staring horrified like I was some kind of strange thing -

Maybe they forgot what an alive person looks like...

I saw The Name from the outside. I knew that's impossible, but I saw it looked like something in a picture and it was so very, very small and far away and I called out to George but he couldn't hear me...

Then they brought up this big ball thing with a huge ball hanging from it and they - they SHOOKED THE MOUND

I screamed. "You're hurting George!" I said, but they wouldn't listen
(continued on page 30)

THE LORD LOVED LITTLE PEOPLE

story by Janet Fox
illustrated by Dan Detemmer

The timeship appeared on top of the water and began to slowly sink. Inside, expressing himself in aroaic (according to this time) abbreviations, Dark managed to get free of his seatbelt and push the ejector.

He was spit out into the water like a green piti lantily. He could swim. He had been specially trained at Time Central to do almost anything. He thrashed his way to shore and pulled himself up, mentally aled, now that he thought about it, that a mountain hadn't decided to be born on this particular spot. He stood shivering on the bank--a mostly forested bank of resiliant green stuff--and looked out toward where the ship had sunk. Maybe, with some help, he could be able to dredge it up. Of course, that didn't take into account what the water would do to the ship's delicate mechanisms.



Well. He shrugged, and a characteristic tragic look appeared on his thin, hollow-cheeked face. His clothes were wet, but the wind wasn't too cold, now that he'd gotten used to it. In fact, this was an altogether beautiful place he'd landed in. The lake was clearly artificial, and the surrounding forest looked at once both wild and landscaped. He had somehow expected a much larger population--cities piled on one another--but this system alone. There wasn't a building in sight.

Of course, there were all kinds of waps and protiated populations everywhere...on the ship. Still, he'd been trained by Timespan, Inc., hadn't he? He chose a direction he liked and started off. There had to be a road, or house, or something.

He saw the house towards evening. It was the most beautiful building he'd ever seen, and not just because he'd been waiting so long. It had a style of architecture that was hard for him to appreciate because it hadn't been invented yet. It was white, reminding him of certain Greek temples though he didn't know why, because it didn't really look like them at all. There was only that aura of long-dreamed-of-cover-to-be-achieved beauty. Only the rolling green countryside, undented and unutilized, could be the proper setting for such a house.

Dark walked toward it but wasn't sure, so he paused the last, that he was getting any closer because he was tired and so much open space surrounded the house. Approaching night lit the house with a lavender glow that came from inside the walls of the building. At last he stood before the structure, unable to find any break in the facade that might be a door.

The city burned with light, yet was somehow surrounded with immense darkness; the crowds gathering in the streets seemed to realize this, for they spoke in muted voices as if the buildings had giant ears with which to overhear their protests. It was an ancient city, translucent with glass and chrome, writhing inwardly with alleys radiant of retrogression and time. The people were different, yet the same as they always had been.

Dark was grumpy with fatigue, so it was a kind of magic when the invisible deer panel didn't fail to reveal a woman. He thought she was an illusion at first, not because of her beauty, which was striking, but because she stood at least ten feet tall. Black hair diluted violet in the tinted light, hanging in loose curls to her shoulders, which were pale, freckled, and bare. A sheath of material that corresponded with scarlet and purple flashes clung like a living thing to her body.

"Moussart" asked a deep voice from behind her as she stood, immobile, in the doorway.

"It's Ajax Test...Universal Timepiece, Inc. May I come in?" And he did so, unannounced, by falling full length across the threshold into the apartment's arms.

When the crowd had gathered in its full force, Wade climbed up onto the hastily erected platform to address them. Heads turned toward him from far and near, and there was a tense silence before he spoke.

"The System have lowered our needs for civilization; we live here, cramped in this stinking city, while they live in luxury as huge estates. How long can we continue living this way? Are we going to take this treatment from them?"

He paused while the crowd responded.

"There are enough of us here to march on the grand estates and make our demands heard. Who will march with me?"

A ragged chorus of "I will! I will!"

"Now free the surrounding farmland will join us. We'll be an army. Intimidate!"

The throng began forming itself into uneven ranks. Wade climbed down from the platform and got into the front seat of an ancient yellow convertible.

Some of those with him had cars, too, but all these would have to be abandoned at Road's End.

York awoke on a bed as big as a meadow, and the sheets were made of a fabric that had a warm and living quality against his skin. He looked around and studied the room. Bills on the walls, iridescent carpets about three inches deep, and at one side a glass wall that overlooked a garden--beeches laden with cream about inches across, white-high cardinals, and their lilacs that burst the eye with their brightness.

He rose to find his clothes neatly folded beside the bed. He wondered, as he dressed, what the best story to tell them would be. Chances were these beds' beds any time-spreaders were ahead of him, and they weren't likely to accept a time-traveler without a threat.

He strolled out into the main room. Breakfast was waiting for him at a small table at one side of the room. The food was delicious, if slightly overabundant.

A vaguely familiar voice said something unintelligible. A piece of music came over a high-backed blue velvet chair. York stepped around in front of it and saw a massive man dressed in a loose-fitting translucent overall, smoking a huge cigar. The big man greeted him in the same unintelligible but familiar language. Well, there would be no need for logical explanations. It looked as if hard words were going to be the highest level of communication. At any rate, the man viewed him respectfully, without much surprise. The great size seemed to make him more cautious, slower thinking. He evidently lived and moved might all this luxury and space like a sleepy bull in a spacious pasture. Looking



out the immense picture window, Turk saw the woman riding across the lawn on an elephantine black horse.

As Turk spoke with the man and woman, he was amazed to find that their language was only a speeded up, slightly changed version of his own. They pressed him for an explanation, treating him like a guest. He hoped that, when he was able to talk to them more easily, he could get them to help raise his broken timetrip.

The woman, Kilgus, was especially friendly to him. Now, he went horseback riding with her, though the gigantic horse sure he rode was difficult to control. They galloped for miles without seeing any sign of an outside civilization. When at last they passed on the crest of a hill with nothing but more countryside in view, Turk took the opportunity to ask the question that had been bothering him.

"Other people?" she said, her eyes going wide with surprised innocence.

"Surely, you and Broughton aren't the only two people in this world."

She laughed. "Of course we're not. The Mikersons live just a few thousand miles away. And in the other direction, there's the Raynes-Woodard family. They have two lovely children. We can call them by vid any time we want, and we visit them often."

"But what's happened to the others?"

She looked at him, shocked, as if he had said something blatantly stupid. "How did you know about that?"

"But I don't know anything--"

"It was necessary, that's all," she said defensively. "Now there's plenty of room for everyone. Besides, they never knew the difference."

"Do you mean you--destroyed them?"

"You really don't know, do you? Of course not, we'd never do anything like that. They're perfectly fine. It wasn't wrong; really, it wasn't."

He was unable to get any more information out of her, as they turned the horse's heads toward home.

It was hard to get through their keep third processes, but at least he had progressed by communicating with them. He had the feeling that there had been some sort of war--wasn't that what the prognosticators always insisted upon? But the lush green countryside denied it on every side. These trees were old. Nowhere were there any indications of the scars of war.

When they reached the house, she had to help him down off the horse. She didn't mind she seemed to like doing it, but it made him feel foolish. And he was sometimes made uncomfortable by the way she looked at him. He had no intention of taking a two foot tall mistress, neither in this time or any other.



The marchers stopped. They had reached Hade's hole: a wall that seemed no higher than a man's chest, but a deceptive wall that had not been breached by the people of the city for over a hundred years. One of the men approached it, and tried to grasp the top to hoist himself up, but his hands only slip off smoothness. Somehow, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't get a grip on the top of that wall.

Hade called. "Not that way," he called to a few others who had come forward to try. He signalled his crew, and they set to work at the base of the white, stone-like material with cutting torches.

The army broke ranks and lounged about on the moss. "Doesn't it's magic," said one of them.

"I don't believe in magic," said the man who had tried to cross. "But there's something strange about that wall. It's only about five feet high, yet when you come up to it, it seems hard to see; it makes you dizzy."

"This whole march seems like a waste of time to me," said another man. "The Teymer have always ruled, and they always will rule. I'll wager by tomorrow we'll be bedded down with our own wives, and I, for one, will be glad of it."

But as the hours passed the white material began to glow red, and at last a sliver of light came through, glowing in the deep shadows that were always massed about the strange wall. A cheer rose, and Hade's name was shouted often.

By nightfall the gap was large enough to let the army through a few at a time. Those who'd been dreaming of their own beds grovelled as they prepared to sleep on the hard ground on the far side of the Magic Wall. Somewhere, someone was singing a very old song about a hero who had breached the wall and won the hall. The singer substituted the name of Harold Hade for that of the ancient hero, and the song sounded good in the great void of night.

"And my ship is at the bottom of one of your artificial lakes," said Teek. "That's how I traveled to your time."

"I don't blame you," said Broughton. "This is a fine time. The best."

"But you don't understand. I'd like you to help us get the craft out. I think that together we could do it."

"Perhaps, but why should you want it?"

"To get back to my own time."

"You want to leave?" asked Ellyne with a worried tone. "Aren't you happy here?"

"Well, I, uh, suppose I'm happy enough here. You've been very generous, but--"



"You've just got to get accustomed, that's all. We have the best world possible--all this space for ourselves. That sure could you want?"

"Well, nothing, I guess. But would you help us--"

Broughton had already turned around and was fitting to his head the earphones and eyegaze of a book. Soon he was in a stupor from the dulling sounds and pictures.

The army approached the mansion with a rather inexplicable slowness. All they had to do was use their eyes. Just one house with only two people inside--two helpless people.

But the men hung back, half paralyzed by a feeling of awe, as if they were planning to invade the hall of the gods.

"The Men-At-The-Top have held us in bondage long enough!" shouted Wade. "Burn the house; kill them!" Working up the courage only a mob can generate, the marchers charged towards the house, some of them lighting torches.

York and Broughton were just coming out of the house as the army stormed toward it.

York wasn't sure what was happening but the big man, for once startled out of his lethargy, cowered under his breath and began to stamp with his booted feet.

The front rank of the army was crushed, then a hundred of those on the left flank. Rage seizes of cloud above them had obscured the sun, and, seized by heaven, they howled and ran. The big man followed them, stamping on stragglers, getting thirty or forty of them before they scattered and were lost in the grass.

York stood stunned. With a sick feeling, he knew what he would find before he knelt over the crushed, tiny forms of men barely an eighth-inch tall. One of them still writhed with an agonized life. York picked him up very carefully, placing him on the palm of his hand. The tiny man seemed to be saying something, but his voice was too small and high-pitched to be understood. He writhed in pain, then lay still. York stared at him, unable to decide what to do with the corpse.

A large hand gripped his wrist and slapped the object out of his hand. "That's nasty; don't touch it!"

"But they're men. They're men!"

"They don't know when they're well off," said the big man, waving back. He snatched a fist into an opposite palm. "We arranged everything perfectly. Plenty of room for them, plenty of room for us."

"They even have their own cities," said Ellyse. "Why can't they leave our houses alone? We gave them their cities, made as small as themselves."

"They didn't even know when it happened," added the big man. "We've arranged the perfect society, but are they grateful? No sir, not that!"

"You're murderers!" York screamed.

A hand hit his across the face with a force that almost knocked him down. A strong grip locked on his arm, and he felt himself marched toward the house.

"I'm really afraid I can't allow you to say such things about us. We've taken you in, Alex--adopted you. Now I'll have to punish you by putting you to bed without any supper. If you're a good boy, maybe tomorrow I'll take you horseback riding again. You've never to be so happy here, Alex, you'll see."



THEY CAME FROM HELL

story by Jimmy Leaphin
illustrated by Mark Catlette

"You wish to land now, Sener?" asked the pilot, his voice barely audible above the roar of the airplane. He was a black-haired man in his early thirties, with a thin mustache and dark glasses. The pilot glanced over his shoulder, into the back seat.

"Circle once more," answered Sener, without taking his eyes from the window. With his blue eyes and wavy black hair, he looked like a Viking conqueror.

Yet the land below seemed hardly worth conquering. It was lonely and desolate, one of the most remote parts of Mexico. The steep mountains curled in the little valley, making it inaccessible except by sea. There were no trees, only sparsely scattered cacti and giant rocks sculptured into fantastic shapes by the winds. Sene looked to Sager like sentinels placed there to guard this wild country against the intrusions of civilization.

Equally forbidding was the beach. Instead of white sands there was only black lava, strewn with the wreckage of ships.

At the mouth of the valley stood a small village. The Indians who lived there had almost no contact with the outside world, and consequently were as wild as the surrounding country. Looking down upon the cluster of brown huts, Sener could spot none of the natives. He pictured them cowering inside, like frightened children.

The yellow sulfur pit passed into view. Seen from the air, it looked dry. For centuries this area had been the center of volcanic activity until the major earthquake of last week. Then the hot springs and bubbling sulfur pit had suddenly dried up. That was why he and Marie had come to this God-forsaken place.

Sener looked at his fiancée, asleep in the seat next to him. She was a beautiful girl of nineteen, with olive-like skin and raven black hair. When she stood, that hair hung below her waist, but now it dangled gently to the upper curves of her body. Through her white blouse, Sager could see the outline of her breasts, rising and falling rhythmically.

He longed to make love to her. They'd been engaged for three months now, but she'd always shunned his intimate advances. A Spanish girl from Seville, New Mexico, Marie Sanchez was conservative and deeply religious. She clung tenaciously to the old ways, believing that a girl should remain a virgin until marriage.

Such a delay was meaningless to Sager, who had been used to having sex when and with whom he wanted. Once, in her apartment, he'd almost persuaded her, but her roommate came home early. Well, tonight they'd be alone, and things were going to be different.

"Now?" asked the pilot.

"Now!" Sager repeated, a smirk on his boyish face. He took pride in his youthful misadventures. Since the age of three he'd been called a genius and now, at twenty, he was the youngest instructor at UCLA.

He thought of his office, walled in by books, and that sign on the door: ROYCE HERRMAN, Ph.D., ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GENOLOGY. He hated that word "assistant," and hoped that after this trip the university would grant him a full professorship.

The roar of the engine gave way to the low whistling of the wind as the plane began its descent. Sager had the sensation of going down in a

feet elevator, and his ears were popping.

Suddenly Maria trembled and stared wide-eyed at Roger.

"Take it easy, darling. We're just landing."

"Thank goodness, it was only a dream," she sighed. "I thought one of those horrible creatures had us."

"Dreams? Surely you don't really believe in them?"

She shrugged. "There are stranger things in this world than you or I ever dreamed of, Maria." Her eyes twinkled.

"Perhaps it is not Shakespeare who gives you such queer ideas," said Roger, taking the magazine from her lap. He quickly found the caption, **MONSTER IN MEXICO**, and let his eyes rove down the column:

A Mexican woman trod slowly up the narrow, winding path to the spring. Here she filled the earthen jar, balanced it on her head, and started back down the mountain. Suddenly, the earth rocked violently. The jar toppled from her head and shattered into a thousand pieces. Carmen Rodriguez, too, fell beside the path. She tried to rise, but pain cut deeply into her fractured right leg. Watching helplessly, she saw demons spewed out of the nearby hot springs flinging to earth an an umbrella of boiling water. They struggled to get through the narrow opening which no longer spouted steam and water. Next, the beast-like creatures tried the nearby sulfur pit, but it, too, had ceased bubbling. Over and over again they jumped into the pit, but only their heavy feet and long sleeves submerged in the searing sulfur. Then, in single file, they marched down the path towards Carmen. Lowering the pain, she jumped to her feet and slipped into the village, screaming, "The diables are coming!"

Without finishing the article, Roger threw the magazine down and laughed out loud.

Maria did not smile.

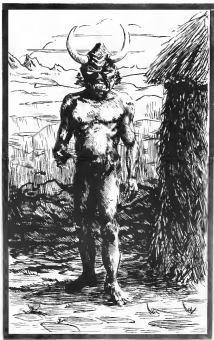
"Don't you see, darling," Roger continued, "belief in demons is common among primitive peoples. Having no knowledge of science, they find demons a convenient explanation for any geological phenomena they fear or fail to understand--the earthquake, the bubbling pit. It's nothing but superstition."

Out of the plane's window, he caught a glimpse of something black swirling near the coast, but it disappeared behind an outcropping of lava as the plane dipped low. How wild and evil, he thought, but he was unable to shake the queer feeling that the sight had produced.

The airplane sliced the top off the larger waves and squirted down like a huge gull. It slowly reversed direction and made its way to shore. A few feet from where the first clusters of lava protruded from the water, the pilot again turned the ship seaward. "This is as close as we can go, Captain."

With the engine shut down, the silence seemed to press upon them like an invisible sheet. Even the lapping of the waves seemed far away. The pilot turned to Roger. "Must you stay here, Roger? This is a place of much evil." His suddenly quickened remarking, "No one comes here any more--not even the tourists. There have been strange reports. They say there are demons."

Without waiting to hear more, Roger pushed himself into the tepid water. It'd been all he could do to persuade Maria to make this trip, and now the pilot was talking like a madman. "Come on," he said, beckoning to the arid Maria.



The girl's face blushed as she raised her long red skirt until her white thighs gleamed in the moonlight. Then she straddled Roger's neck, and he trudged his way to shore.

Returning to the airplane twice more, he carried out two sleeping bags, two suitcases, and a scale-like mechanism wrapped in transparent plastic. This last he handled most carefully.

Cupping his mouth, he shouted, "See you in three days."

"I will come this far, but no farther." There was a roar as the prop tossed a spray of water into the air. Slowly the airplane climbed out of the water, and was airborne again. The couple watched until it was only a dot in the sky.

A short hike from the water's edge brought them to the first grass hut.

"Doesn't seem to be anyone home," said Marie.

Roger set the baggage down on the dusty trail and meandered over to an open doorway. The hut was completely empty, except for a strange odor. Roger sniffed. "Skiff. Why would anyone have skiffed in here?" he asked, turning to Marie.

"Smells like the devil himself," she said, keeping her distance.

There was a slight rustling, like wind, and Marie shrieked. Then Roger saw him standing on the trail--an odd, completely naked object for the strange red mask with long, curved horns protruding from each side.

"Why, it is the devil," said Roger absently, "and his followers." A group of villagers gathered behind their white doors. There were men and women in brightly colored garments, and tiny little children peering from behind their mothers' skirts.

"Better tell them who we are and why we've come," Roger told Marie.

"Hush! hush!" she said softly. "Hush! hush! hush!"

One gray-haired man stepped forward. After a brief conversation with him, Marie turned to Roger. "He is the chief. We are to sleep in his house during our stay at the village."

Roger frowned. "Tell him no thanks. We'll stay in that empty hut."

Marie shook her head. "The invitation of a village chief is an honor and Roger's refusal."

Roger swore softly to himself as he and his fiancée followed the natives. They passed other empty huts, each smelling of burnt sulfur. Finally the band dispersed. Roger and Marie followed the chief into his dwelling.

It was a small, round structure, with a dirt floor. The spaces furnished, like the hut itself, were made entirely of mud and straw. They consisted of a bed, against the wall, and two chairs. The chief motioned him to guests into the latter, and stood cross-armed watching them. In the center of the room his wife, an old, toothless woman, built up the fire. The smoke curled upward and disappeared through a hole in the roof.

The chief spoke haltingly in Spanish, a language almost as foreign to him as it was to Roger. Marie nodded occasionally. When the old man had finished talking, she turned to Roger and translated. "There have been many deaths in the village due to disease. Even now, there are people, sick, who may die before morning."

"Disease, eh?" started Roger. "Primitive superstitions!"

Lowering Roger's eyebrows, Marie said to the chief, "I'm a student nurse. Perhaps I can help." The old man's face brightened as she took a bottle of pills from her suitcase.

"Surely, you're not going to use that!" Roger objected. "It's all the satisfaction we have. Suppose you get sick?"

She smiled. "You look healthy enough."

A baby began crying in the next hut. Maria stepped outside, followed by the chief. Roger, too, stepped along to watch Maria dispense the drug. He passed, even, to look into one of the empty huts where the smell of burnt sulfur was especially pungent. "It is the mark of the demons," said Maria. "The stink of death."

At last, when the girl had done all she could, they returned to the chief's hut. There, the old woman dished out a simple meal of tortillas and beans, and the four ate in silence. The food was surprisingly good, Roger thought.

After dinner, he carefully checked his machine. He felt a thrill every time he looked at the scale-like apparatus. It was his own invention -- "The Korean Scale," he called it. The instrument was designed to measure the shift occurring along a fault line, and the ideal time to use it was immediately after an earthquake. Tomorrow he'd test it for the first time, but he was sure it would work. After all, he'd made it himself. Satisfied that the machine was all right, he carefully tucked it inside its plastic cover.

The sun sank behind the mountains, leaving no afterglow. Darkness stretched across the land like a huge black curtain. But in the center of the village burned a fire, and before it stood the witch doctor, chanting loudly. He ended the ritual by hurling like a wild dog. "This is really weird," said Roger, watching from the doorway.

Maria had already spread out the sleeping bags--on opposite sides of the room, he noted with disgust. "In light of the situation...dark of the night," he corrected himself, chuckling at his own pun. "There's nothing to be but asleep." And sleep came quickly to Roger Newman.

In the little hut, only Maria remained awake. The air was cold, and there were strange sounds in the night. After a while, she moved to the open door and stared out. The moon had set, yet the village was bathed in a pale light.

Suddenly, she heard a low moan which seemed to come from the next hut. She hesitated a moment before proceeding next door. Fearing it, she saw nothing but darkness.

She heard it again. This time the moan seemed to come from further away. She walked slowly toward the noise, looking in the doorway of each hut as she passed them. Nothing. She soon found herself standing beyond the last hut.

From here, the path moved up the mountain. Again came that pleading sound, as if made by someone in distress. She ran along the trail and peered into the darkness. Nothing. Nothing but the stink of burning sulfur.

Finally, she spotted something coming down the path. At first, it was only a dark dot, but as it drew nearer, features became clear--the short black hair covering its entire body, the sharp-pointed ears, the two short horns protruding upward just above the forehead.

It walked with a slight stoop, its long arms dangling in front. Its eyes were glowing balls of fire. Slowly, reluctantly, the creature crept toward Maria, swaying from side to side as it came.

She watched the thing's approach in utter horror yet, like a rabbit concealed by a crane, she could neither move nor take her eyes from it. Only when it reached out to take her was she able to break the spell.

She turned to run, only to find another creature approaching from the opposite direction. Then another, and another, each swaying from side to



side. As they drew near, the demons extended their black, hairy arms toward her, exposing their knife-like claws.

Maria spun around, but all routes of escape were closed by the monsters. She felt the terrible, fiery clutch of a claw on her shoulder. It seemed to burn through her very flesh. Her mantle stained with the stink of burning sulfur. Her mouth widened in one long, agonizing scream which pierced the night like a dagger.

Sager suddenly sat upright. Was it a scream he'd heard, or had he only dreamt it? As the eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, he saw that the other sleeping bag--Maria's--was empty.

"Maria," he called. There was no answer. He stumbled to the door and looked out. In the pale light he could see the outlines of the thorned huts. The fire had died down, leaving only a few glowing coals.

"Maria!" he shouted. No reply but the whisper of the wind.

Sager hurried across the room and shook his best mate. The old man awoke with a start. "Maria is gone," Sager said.

The chief sat up in bed and stared across at the empty sleeping bag. He crossed himself.

"Come on," Sager beckoned the old man. "We have to find her."

"No, Sager. It was Maria. El diablo--"

Rager charged out of the hut. "Marid! Marid!" he called. But there was no answer, and in the village no one stirred.

He went back to the hut where Maria had cared for the sick child. He saw no one at first, but when spotted all of the inhabitants, huddling in a corner like sheep. Rager tried to pull the father aside. "We have to find Maria," he kept repeating.

The men shook back in panic. His wife clutched his other arm tightly, and a little boy sat in the corner, squealing.

Rager raced out of the hut and down the path, away from the village. The trail was deserted. Except for the distant call of a coyote, all was quiet. Rager surveyed the weird mountains of lava in the pale light that seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere. They kept the village isolated, but also seemed to mark it as a place of evil. Not knowing where to search, Rager gave up and returned to the child's hut.

A small fire was burning in the center of the hut, where the child's wife bent over a pot. "Cede, Rager?"

Rager threw himself down on Maria's sleeping bag, burying his face in his hands. When he opened his eyes again, the sun was shining.

Outside, he found a number of natives waiting. They carried machetes and various tools that could pass, if need be, as primitive weapons. The witch doctor joined them, and all began to chant.

Rager hurried out of the village, ignoring the procession that followed him. Soon they were climbing the narrow, winding trail up the mountain.

Suddenly the chanting stopped. Every man froze in his tracks. Rager caught a whiff of sulfur. A smoke came from somewhere up ahead.

The villagers fled like rabbits. Rager's heart pounded mechanically. He backed up far enough to pick up a dropped machete, all the while keeping his eyes fixed on the trail ahead. With a smothering gasp, he held the blade in readiness.

Then the bushes parted to the right of the trail, and there stood Maria. Her cloth hung in shreds, stained with blood and sulfur. Her hair, too, was matted with yellow. She stared at Rager through glassy eyes, moving toward him with short hesitant steps that seemed to pain her.

Rager dropped the weapon and rushed forward as the girl collapsed into his arms. He carried her back to the village, where the frightened natives stood waiting. They made way for the couple, assessing themselves as Rager and Maria passed.

Inside the child's hut, Rager laid Maria gently down on her sleeping bag.

Suddenly, there was a wild, animalistic cry. Rager whirled to face the witch doctor, standing just inside the doorway. He was starting upward, as if in a trance, but his body moved in short, jerky motions as he chanted and rattled a ruffled tin can, filled with bones.

Grinding his teeth, Rager shoved the witch doctor so hard that his hardest neck tapped to the floor. "Get out!"

The witch doctor's face showed a mixture of fright and surprise. He swept up the devil neck and charged out the door, where he stood shaking his fist at Rager. When the key professor stepped forward, the witch doctor took away. The villagers, too, retreated, leaving Rager alone with Maria.

Feeling some water in a earthen basin, Rager dipped his handkerchief and washed the girl's face. It felt hot, as if she'd been in the sun for a long time. She mumbled about demons, but much of what she said was too garbled for Rager to understand.



"Majestasautem," he said to himself. Without leaving her side, he felt around in her suitcase until he found the little brown bottle. With a curse, he threw the empty bottle across the room.

The witch doctor began to chant again. Maria grew restless, and tossed her head from side to side. She continued her impatient mutterings while Roger tried, vainly, to cool her fevered forehead.

At last he threw the cloth into the basin and stepped out of the hut. He hurried through the village and up the mountain path. He'd go to the place where he'd found Maria, he thought. Maybe he'd at least find a clue to her nightmare.

When the village had passed from view, hidden by mounds of lava, he was again confronted with the pungent odor of burnt sulfur. His heart beat faster. Beads of sweat appeared on his face and hands. He thought of the empty huts in the village, and of what Maria had said--"the mark of the demon, the stink of death."

He turned to go back, but stopped himself. He had to see, had to know.

As he trudged along the steepest part of the trail, the sulfur smell grew stronger. He felt sick. Breathing was difficult and heavy. He came to the spot he'd found Maria.

He left the path and climbed over a bank of lava. From its ridge, he could see the dried-out sulfur bed. It was a low place, where nothing grew. "The valley of death," he mused, *homerianly*.

The pit was about a hundred feet in diameter, almost a perfect circle. The sulfur was dry and flaky, yet soft. He walked along its edge, passing over the animal tracks. They looked almost human, except for the long claw marks at the toes. Near the center of the pit, he spotted terraced shoe tracks left by a small foot. "Maria's," he said aloud. The sulfur near her tracks had been disturbed, as if by a struggle. There were also hundreds of black, needle-like fur scattered about.

"Oh my God!" Roger gasped as he backed away. Then he turned and raced back down the mountain.

In the chief's hut, he found Maria's condition worse. Her face felt hot, like fresh coals. She mumbled again about demons, sulfur, and fire, but Roger didn't stay to listen.

He quickly examined the contents of a small box from his suitcase. It was all there, the dynamite, caps, and fuse. But such a small charge, designed to only activate his machine. It would never do the job required.

Roger found the chief with the rest of the Indians, gathered around the evening fire in the center of the village. "Have you any gasoline?" he asked.

The old man did not reply.

"Gasoline," Roger repeated. Still the chief did not understand. Shielding his eyes with his hand, he looked at the sun hanging low over the mountains. "Don le pusea del sol viene muerto."

"With the setting of the sun comes death," Roger translated, recalling a little of his high school Spanish. "Old man, you're just full of comfort and lay."

Roger went to the beach, his last hope. Remembering a master of the old wrecks, he settled on the remains of a small fishing boat. Its hull was mostly intact, though it creaked loudly as he climbed on deck. The cabin was dark, filled with the smell of rotting wood. Roger stumbled around below until he found a five-gallon can. He shook it, broke off the rusty spout, and sniffed.

Carrying the gasoline and dynamite, Roger stopped by the village just long enough to pick up a machete. Then he rushed up the trail, now almost hidden in the deep shadows of the mountains.



With the pickaxe he poked around in the sulfur, sinking the long knife to its handle. At that point he dug a hole, buried the pickaxe end, and ripped the dynamite root to its lighting the fuse, he threw himself down behind the nearest pile of lava.

After an eternity of waiting, he heard a muffled boom, followed by a steady hissing. To Roger, it seemed the whole world was lit by that tower of fire. Seen behind the rocks, he had to shield his face from the intense heat. Between his fingers, he saw that the sulfur pit was bubbling again.

For the first time, he saw the creatures. There were four of them, a solemn procession of evil, moving toward the pit.

Quickly, one of them sank through the opening into the earth. It was followed by the second, then the third, until finally all of the beetle-like creatures had vanished.

Roger watched until the fire died. There remained only the gentle hissing of the pit, and the terrible stink of burning sulfur. He went it all the way back to the village.

The fire in the center of the village burned on, though the natives had long since dispersed. Roger entered the chief's hut, to find the old man and his wife standing over Marie. The girl's face was pale, but the fever had broken.

Seeing Roger, she smiled and pulled herself into a sitting position. Roger bent down to her. As the young lovers embraced, the old couple quietly slipped outside. They strolled calmly through the village, holding hands.

the Apach' Curse

story by David C. Smith
illustrated by Gary Fredrick

It was on a cool day in mid-July of the year 1871 that my father and I first entered the run-down, shabby town of Hunter's Creek. Our supplies were low, but our morale high; after a long season of prospecting in the hills of Arizona, we had filled our bags with more than an expected amount of gold dust and silver. Heading back to a place we called home, we then entered on that fateful day the main, dusty street of half-destroyed Hunter's Creek.

This town, if I may take a moment to digress, was named after a certain dried-up river located nearby, once rich in gold ore, discovered some decades earlier by a Cal. John Hunter. Somewhat, Hunter's creek mirrored Hunter's Creek and, after a few wild years of fortune made and lost, the town had disintegrated to its present state of skeletons. Consisted of run-down buildings and rotting shacks, shells of fancy saloons and shabby hotels, Hunter's Creek was now a refuge for all hoboes, welders, bandits, immigrants and passers-through who happened her way.

The first person we met in the town was the proprietor of the local Trading-Post-and-General-Store, a whiskered, middle-aged, plump fellow named "Dusty" Callahan. He gave us some needed supplies for a medium amount of our hard-earned gold dust. Friendly and outgoing, "Dusty" Callahan made to seal our bargain with a drink at the saloon.

"Well, fellows," said he, "I reckon you 'bout the top visitors I'll get today, so's how 'bout a stroll 'round the street to wet our throats by? Won't our passies?"

"I'm Josh Morgan, and this is my father, Jess. We know any place we can bunk up for the night?"

"These place we place to wet our whiskers. Luke has some rooms in the back, kinda cheap-like."

With that, "Dusty" Callahan escorted us to a near-empty bar, embellished with the witting signature of The Dollar Saloon -- liquor and games for rent. The man was low in the seat, grudgingly slipping behind some low-sitting counterpane, dragging down the coverlet of nightline with it. Refusing our horses, we walked up the sagging steps and through the dusty-tinted portals of the dimly saloon.

"Dusty" bought a bottle and we three sat at a corner table, away from the bar, drinking and talking. Hardly was the bottle open when "Dusty" began regaling Father and I with tall-told tales of his days in the West. With salubrious openness he flavored our evening with remembrances of his youth in New England, his forays across the country, his famous battles against "the forces of darkness an' their midnight red-shirts." Now drunk his liquor like an old hand, weaving long phrases in which he further enlighten and amuse us. He was the perfect host to two saddle-weary, dusty-trail riders.

As the hours passed, the saloon grew more crowded. The bar became lined with patrons, and the tables filled up with games, ragged men in town for an evening. "Dusty" said that they came either from town or from their places in the outskirts. Though a motley bunch, he found few strangers in the crowd. "Not many strangers ever come our way," said he. "So' fewer still ever' year."

We continued drinking and "Dusty" kept talking, and the evening wore on and the saloon grew thick and noisy. Night is the middle of an evening



story. "Dusty's" eye caught the figure of a man in the press at the bar. Ignoring his drink, he put down his glass, and the sardonic grin vanished from his lips. Without taking his eyes off the stranger, he said to us, "See ya that way there, the new boy in' the bottle? Now he's walkin' to that far table."

My father and I nodded in silence. "Yes. What of him?"

Now "Dusty" drank down his glass. "There's a strange story to' 'bout that man. I'm sorry for stappin' like that, but ever' time I meet him, I has to pause an' shake a little."

A comment like that seemed out of our host's character, but on looking squarely at the stranger, I wondered little at its utterance. The man was at first glance the most repulsive and disgusting creature ever I had laid eyes on. He sat alone at a far table, drinking with quick jerks, defensive and secretive. He seemed to have a barrier about him, which even the roughest men in the house respected, keeping their distance from him.

In appearance, he can only be described as almost indescribable. Short, wrinkled, hideous, he was a travesty of humanity. Yet more repellant than this, or adding to it, was his distinct loss of various visible parts of his body. His left eye, or rather its empty socket, was covered by a broad band of cloth bound about his head, which covered also the lacerated stump of one ear. When he let his mouth fall open, it was a mutilated, empty cavity, toothless and hollow. His face was lined with scars, some pallid, others starkly black. From both his hands a devastating number of fingers were missing. And from his loping gait, I suspected that he was missing, from at least one foot, several toes as well. Altogether, he was a mutilated little tract of a man, looking like some shivering creature escaped from a surgeon's lair.

"I told ye doubt that he suffers terrible for what he's done," interrupted "Dusty" Callahan, breaking into my thoughts. "He looks like he's paid more'n he oughta."

"What's the story behind him?" asked Father, tearing his eyes away from the stranger and taking a stiff drink.

"I'll say it," asserted "Dusty" after a pause. "But it's a queer one!" He settled back in his chair as well as he could, drank down another shot, and cast a quick glance at the object of our speculation.

"His name is Patch-Spe," began "Dusty." "Leastwise, that's how he's known to ever'one 'bout here. The story I'm tellin' is one ever'body 'round here knows well party well."



"Seems that ol' Patch-eye in his younger days was a sojor in the U.S. Cavalry, an' one of the regiment that was sent into this territory to rout the Apach's off government land. Then Apach's put up a helluva fight, an' them sojors was hard-pressed to keep 'em under control. Fipped 'em out in the last, though.

"The sojors had themselves a field day. They was killin' Indians right an' left an' down the middle, shootin' the dogs in blood, cuttin' down trades an' rapin' their wives an' usin' their young un's for target practice.

"Well sir, ol' Patch-eye, he murdered the whole family of a brack name a Wild Horse. When Wild Horse saw what that sojor had done to his wife an' kids an' family, he shore went wild, awright. He took on Patch-eye and reared 'bout killed him. They was throwin' on the ground an' that Apach' took his knife an' escaped out Patch-eye's eyeball. Ah! Patch-eye shot that Indian in the gut. An' by that time another sojor saw what was goin' on, an' he plugged Wild Horse through the back.

"Well, as that Apach' was a-layin' there dyin', he looked up at the man who had done it all to him, an' with his last breath he cursed him an' told him that he'd tear that white-eyes limb from limb and throw his part'sies in the four winds an' watch his burn in white-eyes' hell! Ay when he was dead he was still a-starin' at Patch-eye with them burnin' fiery eyes.

"I guess at that ol' Patch-eye jest 'bout lost his mind, an' was screamin' an' steeplin' an' shootin' more Indians like wrap. He's been here 'bout for as long as anyone kin remember. Lives lookin' outin' jest outside of town. An' ya know, the funny thing is, ever' once'n three while, when he comes into town, he'll have a flicker shootin', or a tom, or some more cats or dogs, or something. An' as soon as that, ya kin hear his screamin' from his cabin all right now. "The liquor's got me!" he'll yell. Or, "Them Indian eyes is at me agin'!" "It's damn strange!"

"Quety's tale was hypnotizing. After hearing it, I shook my head, tried to remember where I was, forced down a swallow of the now bad-tasting liquor. I stole glances at Patch-eye sitting in his corner, and imagined I saw his flaming eye transfixed on each time I looked at him. He was not now only disgusting and repellent; he was haunting.

The object of our scrutiny now finished his bottle of liquor and, to my relief, rose from his table to leave. He started out of his chair (crouching over the empty bottle as he did so) and made his way out of the saloon, into the night. As a kind of post-script, "Quety" added: "He's in here 'most ever' night, drinkin' to all his mind loves. I 'sagine."

Our conversation and thoughts turned now to things other than men with slanted foreheads and Apache features. We continued drinking, moderately, and "Dusty" returned to his humor and airs of earlier in the evening.

It grew late. The bar slowly emptied, the men leaving in small groups, sweating and roughhousing. My father pulled out his watch and declared the time. We rose to bid our best goodnight and make arrangements for our sleeping accommodations.

We three stepped outside into the incriminating night air, crisp and bracing. "Dusty" smiled and gave us his hand, bidding farewell. At that moment, however, the air was rent by an exceptionally loud and violent shriek of terror. My father and I were shocked, but "Dusty" only let out a low laugh. "Now! Now! Sounds like ol' Patch-Eye's at it again tonight!"

But the first scream was followed by another, and that by still more, each more hideous than the last, the wailing harpings of a mindless damned soul. "Dusty's" smile faded. "He ain't never sounded like that before!"

Immediately we were racing down the street, followed by a growing crowd of half-drunk townsmen. The fish tail moon lighted our way. We passed past shops and buildings, into sparse wastelands. "Dusty" pointed out Patch-Eye's cabin. As we approached, the screams faded away.

The place was as silent as a graveyard. The cabin was drenched in deep shadow. I paused a moment, indecisive. But "Dusty" forced open a small window. He stared into the moonlit cabin, choked, and fell back from the window, pale and speechless. He stared at us with a look indescribable. Father went to him.





Arline Cohen
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Don't
you
dare
cut

out the neck! Mr. Barton did not have to wait for "Where of the World" to find a good reader; hasn't he ever heard of the "Bellman" series? I must admit, you had me very worried in "Where of the World;" I thought the only ways you could possibly end that awful story would be to (1) kill her - an obvious waste, (2) reduce her into an office slacker like Miss Wednesday, or (3) simply say: "The management regrets that because women, children and young widows read this publication, we are forced to censor the ending." You smart person, you instead tore the reader up in the reader's face. Excellent report!

I wish I could say I understood "The Book," I'm too young to publish a volume to tell the vampire's tale

less by Al Greenier

in, perhaps?

The first half of "Bellman," as I am sure you are aware, is lifted from Ray Bradbury's "The Dragon." However, Greenier has changed the story around so much that I'm sure we can forgive him. If he promises not to let it happen again. (4)

Enough digging! John Duggan is a real find for your site, or anybody else's site, for that matter. I can't remember when I was so moved by the ending of a story. The last weapon Geyden found was the best of all (I figured it would be, although cynical as I thought it would be another force for destruction) and he found it without over-dramatization, just as he should.

(4) I think you say he is a bit harsh when you say Greenier 'lifted' from Bradbury. Undoubtedly, there is great similarity between the stories, but it is a similarity of concept and treatment. Greenier set out to write a Bradbury-ish piece, probably inspired by "The Dragon," but he used his own words and visions, and even a slightly different mood, to make "Bellman" his, and not a re-hash or plagiarism of "The Dragon."

Lyle Hewitt
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are you accepting entries for Space and Time yet? The reason I ask is that I am working on a "Captain Feet" newspaper strip that might be just right for it (Donna just says it when a bad joke backfires like this" Spookaboo!!!)

[You wouldn't dare...]

Douglas E. Haprinshaw
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May the Great Spotted Coyote get anyone who wants to tamper with OS? It would take the Sun out of the sky.

Who is Gary Prelich? And how did I get so lucky - already and yet? I have no right to complain about anything, but who did that ever stop? Complaints: who wasn't Prelich's name up with mine under "See this?" (5)

Is bad John Duggan's action? Odd genre to choose for a serious statement on war and violence. (44)

Couldn't help liking Loren MacGregor's s/s. The appeal of open ends. Have you thought up any messages for the Billboard? And when you consider, if there were ten new commandments to deliver, isn't that where we'd see Them First?

Liked the Where strip. Can't wait to see where you go with it. You

see, I really believe there are interpersonal communications. [***]

(12) Gary is a commercial artist living in New Orleans who, a few years ago, sent samples of his art to various publishers, as he wanted to get into fiction...and I was lucky enough to be on his list. As for your complaint, you've undoubtedly noticed my own policy in editing artists as well as authors. [**] But really, when you think about it, the most effective anti-violence stories are usually in violent genres with an established format...war stories, westerns, crime stories, and so on. David & Gregory provides a perfect conflict between barbarism and civilization (rising or declining) which, in turn, provides an excellent background for asking all kinds of statements about people in stressful situations. [***] I'm afraid I really can't see a sequel to "Where of the World," but perhaps another story with the same concept....

Ray Tackett
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The heading for your editorial, "People", puts me into a bit of a mood. I'm not going to sound off about taste and all that because I have no taste anyway (have you seen the poster which portrays "The President" in a similar situation?). What I am is that the title is simply out of place in L&S. I've been let it pass if it was in the accompanying WELL section's...but considering the type of size L&S is, the title simply doesn't fit. You've tried to prevent L&S as a rather serious-type fiction/fantasy and one has come to expect it that way.

John Dwyer's The Last Weapon rather typifies what I said about fan-written fiction in my last letter to you (about two years ago, I believe it was). Dwyer has a good story idea here but his writing--and attempts to detail--just do not carry the idea. I won't go into all of Dwyer's literary failures but I cannot let "dinky small" pass. Dinky small? Indeed?

Larry MacGregor's The Message, on the other hand, is almost enough to save me out by words. This was quite good.

The Barker/Karpis comic, Shack of the World, is quite reminiscent of the comic book stories that were popular in the days before the Comics Code. The character was a rather standard figure (still may be, for all I know) and the anti-heroism is also typical. All rather bland, actually.

Readers who go looking for the classics in FFF and FF should be warned that they will not get "complete and unadorned" (as they say) versions. Mary Gooding, writes to her name, did receive vast amounts of fanmail from the well-known Murray files but the longer novels were often out to meet the space requirements of FFF or FF. Mary Gooding was also something of a biohack and exercised a discreet censorship by making assorted changes in wording at times.

Darrell Schweitzer
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It's a good time to talk about a few principles of writing, because they are consistently violated in the stories this time.

The first is that the subject of story writing is to create an illusion in which the reader is to be deceived. The story must be convincing, so the reader can suspend his disbelief. The author must maintain a certain superiority over his reader. In the fictional universe the author is a god and must act like one. Things must be in their proper place, and functioning properly. The writer/god must be fully aware of what's going on. If even once the reader catches him making a mistake, the authority of the writer begins to falter. If it is a major blunder, or if there are a lot of minor ones, the writer is weakened, the reader's belief shattered, and the story is a failure. Once that happens, the quality of the writing doesn't matter. The normal relationship between writer and reader is distorted and everything comes crumbling down (possibly the best horrible example is Isaac Asimov's "Age and Consciousness," a beautiful story based on a totally ridiculous premise). If the reader's confidence in the story is lost, he won't care what happens to the characters since he won't be able to believe in them.

The undermine mistake can be very big. "The Last Weapon," by John

Baggins, is filled with them. Slowly but surely, they destroy the tale. The first and most serious blunder is the first word. The hero should not have been named Seydlis. Seydlis, as I'm sure you're aware, is a hard free The Hobbiting. It is very dangerous to include a name free a known mythology, and fail to relate to that mythology. Consider what would happen if someone wrote an imaginary world fantasy about a King Arthur who had a bright named Lancelot, and then proceeded with a plot which had nothing whatever to do with Arthurian legend. It would be distracting, to say the least. Or consider a Conan-type character placed in a Conan-type world, having Conan-type adventures, only his name is Glessem. The reader keeps looking for connections to the recognized myth cycle and when he doesn't find them, he becomes aware of the artificiality of the whole thing and ceases to be properly involved in the story. It is very important when you're writing imaginary world fantasy that you keep things totally divorced from the familiar. Otherwise, tired constantly, James Branch Cabell could mention real places in the Peleusian stories, but he had to watch himself.

A group of other serious one word slips in the tale involves the part in which the hero kills the soldier with a rock in the desert. Deserts are made of sand, sea, and rocks just aren't lying around. At least, not in the kind of desert Baggins indicates (you don't have boulders in Sahara deserts, the you do in the American southwest). It's corrected. Also, it is said that Seydlis spurs his horses on towards the city. Considering that he set out on his quest on foot, and is wearing sandals, it is unlikely that he would have spurs.

Someone should tell Baggins that a lion is a seasonal prairie animal. It lives in groups of a dozen or so individuals in the high grasses of the African plains. It is unlikely that one would be living alone in a cave.

The moral of all this is very simple: every word is a story-seller. Since words are the medium used by the author, mastery of them is his most important skill. He should take into account not only what each and every word means literally, but also what it connotes. Each word should be considered over, considered, dropped if unnecessary, changed if a better one is available. This is called polishing. The story in question reads like it was dashed off, without any checking for little inconsistencies. One does not dash off art. Journalism, possibly, but never art.

Besides that, it shares with hundreds of other amateur stories the fault of being underdeveloped. Perhaps a tale of this type would work best at a length of about 11,000 words. Each episode should be an adventure in itself. The world and characters should be fleshed out, possibly with a prologue as the experiences of the ritual that which the hero is going to be emphasized to the reader. Also, the magic behind the whole thing should be developed more. Obviously all the events didn't really happen, and were a magic-induced dream, but the magic of this should be explained. It might have to have a few interludes of behind-the-scenes commentary by the people responsible.

Idea good, treatment poor. Classic fan fiction.

"The host" is dreadful. We don't have to worry about small things sounding ill, because it hasn't got a prayer to begin with. The writing is terribly disjointed and almost incoherent. These short paragraphs do not follow each other well, and jump about very badly.

For example, at the bottom of the first page we have that paragraph beginning "Part of an entertainment given the winter before..." This is quite a jump from the preceding text. It seems for a moment that the author is changing the subject, it could have been fixed with something like "He recalled an entertainment..." so that the jump remains on the protagonist. This one example doesn't seem much, but the whole story is like that and becomes difficult to follow. Again is a poor stylist.

The second major failing of the tale is that once one plows through it the plot turns out to be so banal as to not have been worth the effort. The difference between a good fan fic story and a bad one is that the good one has a potentially good idea. This one doesn't.

"Twilight" gets off to a bad start by resembling Ray Bradbury's "The

There is something about your format that pleases me. What should I call it, though? An air of professionalism, as evidenced by a solid and persistent format, good stories, regular features, and the fact that the size excites life. Life, eh, that is an important thing for a size to have. Life is what makes me like since since over the horizon with professional oriented contributors. The editors are people. You see that in their editorial comments, in the various messages that pop up here and there. I'm not saying that errors are good, it's simply that I don't feel not type, polished pro art is that human, although no doubt about it they are rare things to have.

Cosmos. Most welcome in any event. The ending, in one aspect, a report. In another, a truly interesting variant on the type of stuff that Greasy and Keris come out.

The Message. Not really a story, more of a statement on that most fascinating of subjects, sex. No plot, really, just an idea. Fiction is changing. Science Fiction must evolve along with it. Is it really evolving, or merely retreating to simpler forms?

Schweitzer and Weinberg, both human, both prone to a bit of literary bluntness. How do they know stuff is really as good or as bad as they say?

Open Orbit, a letter column reputed to be a wasteland. Probably true. Surely you can't guarantee Len Gering will let you every time, can you? I suppose Gering could not say that "like this, like that, got space and time today," before it terminates. Hey, Nick, is this a creative letter? Gosh, I hope it is.

Ed's "No House For Thirteen," a weird & scary tale he illustrated himself, is scheduled for next issue. Let's see, I've got room for one more letter...a short one...

Fred Marshall
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About your letter sections: there were too many of them. A maximum of three letters should be printed. I got the idea from the rest of the issues that you're not lacking contributors, so why not fill up some of that space with a story?

PERSONIFICATION II features

"The Pink Umbrella" by David S. Brown
"The Music of Harry Ford" by Gordon Linnar (assigned to "Dangerous Business")
"Free Speech For Madmen," a classic Finnish reprint by John Barry
"The Greenback Retalia," wherein the fearlessly famous MAFIAA entrepreneur rises from the grave to sweep havoc on the world in general and Sharon Manning in particular...

"Glee"
Marcell Schweitzer on the truth behind the sensational David Harvey issue; Arlene Vach with a chilling tale of horror completed from the notes of the late, great, master of the macabre, R.F. Lovecraft; an authoritative discussion on the astrological basis for Japwriting; and whatever editorial resources can scrape out of the air on nights when the moon is full.

Future issues will contain a reprint of a Bob Kane column from the famous COMICS, Donald Keller's music column, started by Jacob Fox, Lisa Tuttle and (possibly) Sandy Hunter, articles by Eric Lindsay and (also possibly) David S. Keller, F.D., to top it all off, Joseph F. Puccio, creator of Shon Kall Tiger Fan Weekly did the 14 returns home with a new round robin installment. If you think the others were...uh...unusual, wait till you see this one.

PERSONIFICATION: 30¢ 4/81 in U.S. Elsewhere (including Canada) 40¢ 1/81

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